

August 30, 2019

DOH-WALTON AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS OBSERVE SEPTEMBER AS HEALTHY AGING MONTH



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Walton County, Fla.— The Florida Department of Health in Walton County (DOH-Walton) and members of the Walton Community Health Improvement Partnership (WCHIP) observe September as Healthy Aging Month. Older adults are one of the fastest growing segments of the Walton County's population, doubling since 2000. Residents over the age of 65 make up over 20 percent of the Walton County's population.

"We believe everyone should have the opportunity to live a long, healthy life, regardless of age, abilities, income, education, race or ethnicity," stated Holly Holt, Health Officer and Administrator of DOH-Walton. "DOH-Walton and our dedicated community partners are committed to removing barriers so that healthy choices are convenient choices for everyone in Walton County."

DOH-Walton, along with other county health department across the state, is partnering with Trust for America's Health and the John A. Hartford Foundation to implement a public health framework to improve the health and well-being of older adults, focusing on areas where public health can support, complement, or enhance aging services.

In May 2019, Walton County became the first in the Florida Panhandle to enter the AARP Network for Age-Friendly States and Communities. This was the first step with integrating and aligning public health with the community partners that provide services to older adults. Now, WCHIP, with the support of the Walton County Board of County Commissioners, is working on analyzing the needs of older adults and determining and implementing evidence-based strategies to address the identified needs.

WCHIP meetings are open to the public, and everyone is encouraged to attend. The next WCHIP meeting will be Wednesday, September 18, 2019, from 8:45 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. at the Florida Department of Health in Walton County, 362 State Highway 83, DeFuniak Springs, Florida 32433. At this meeting, attendees will go over the community health assessment to determine which of the top eight health issues need to be the focus for the next community health improvement plan for the next three years.

If you would like to be involved in WCHIP or for more information, please contact Ryan Mims at Ryan.Mims@flhealth.gov or 850-401-6341.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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Representatives from the Florida Department of Health in Walton County, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, AARP, and the Walton Okaloosa Council on Aging, present the Walton County Board of County Commissioners with the formal certificate for admission into the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities in DeFuniak Springs, Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2019.